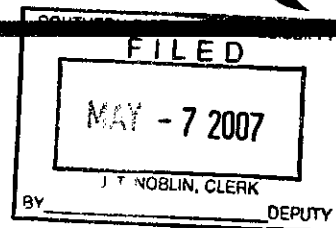


**Mississippi Children's  
Home Services**Compassionate Solutions for Children & Families<sup>SM</sup>**Administration**

1900 North West Street, Suite D  
Jackson, MS 39202  
(601) 352-7784  
(601) 960-0021 (Fax)

**Adoption/Maternity Services\*\***

1900 North West Street, Suite A  
Jackson, MS 39202  
(601) 352-7784  
(601) 960-4349 (Fax)

**ARK\*****Substance Abuse Services**

1801 North West Street  
Jackson, MS 39202  
(601) 352-7784  
(601) 355-3703 (Fax)

**CARES Center\*****Psychiatric Residential Treatment**

402 Wesley Avenue  
Jackson, MS 39202  
(601) 352-7784  
(601) 360-0585 (Fax)

**CARES School & School Day Program\***

Jackson Campus  
402 Wesley Avenue  
Jackson, MS 39202  
(601) 352-7784  
(601) 360-0037 (Fax)

**Intensive In-Home Services\***

15465 Oak Lane  
Unit 100-J  
Gulfport, MS 39503  
(228) 863-4992  
(228) 701-0057 (Fax)

**Powers\*****Transitional Therapeutic Group Home**

P.O. Box 1078  
Jackson, MS 39215  
(601) 372-9468  
(601) 346-0956 (Fax)

**RAP Team\*****Prevention & Education Services**

1801 North West Street  
Jackson, MS 39202  
(601) 352-7784  
(601) 355-3703 (Fax)

**South Mississippi Children's Center\*\***

P.O. Box 646  
Hattiesburg, MS 39403  
(601) 582-8891  
(601) 582-8896 (Fax)

**Therapeutic Foster Care Services\***

15465 Oak Lane  
Unit 100-J  
Gulfport, MS 39503  
(228) 863-4992  
(228) 701-0057 (Fax)

**Warren County Children's Shelter\*\***

P.O. Box 820174  
Vicksburg, MS 39182  
(601) 634-0640  
(601) 634-0724 (Fax)

May 7, 2007

HAND DELIVERED

3:04cv251 TSK-JCS

Mr. J.T. Noblin, Clerk  
United States District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi  
United States Courthouse  
245 East Capitol Street  
Jackson MS 39201

Re: Comments to the Clerk of Court on the proposed Olivia Y. settlement

Dear Mr. Noblin:

I am writing this letter to the court in support of the proposed Olivia Y. Settlement Agreement. I am a licensed clinical social worker with 43 years of experience in the field of child welfare and behavioral health. For the past 28 years, I have served as the Chief Executive Officer of Mississippi Children's Home Services (MCHS). Established in 1912, MCHS provides a continuum of behavioral health and social service programs to improve the lives of Mississippi's children and families. This information is provided in order to emphasize our vested interest in the safety, permanency and well-being of Mississippi's families, children and youth.

MCHS is committed to improving the quality of services for Mississippi's families. Over the years we have developed a positive interdependent relationship with the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children's Services. We understand how vital a coordinated child welfare partnership is between public and private providers and communities across the state to create the most effective and efficient service delivery system possible.

We want to acknowledge the efforts of the Division of Family and Children's Services and support the positive actions that have been developed and implemented to date. We can appreciate the difficult task and extensive responsibility the Mississippi Department of Human Services has for the children in their care and their need for adequate financial and community support. We understand that many of the needed changes require firm support of state leadership, including the governor and state legislators, to remedy the systemic problems and insure sustainability.



Joint Commission

ACCREDITED ORGANIZATION

\*A Program of CARES Center, Inc., an affiliate of the Mississippi Children's Home Society

\*\*A Program of the Mississippi Children's Home Society

Mississippi Children's Home Society and CARES Center, Inc. are affiliates of Mississippi Children's Home Services, Inc.

Mr. J.T. Noblin, Clerk  
May 7, 2007  
Page 2

We agree with the inclusion of agency accreditation through the Council on Accreditation (COA) and based on our experiences feel confident that this process will lead to sustainable improvements within the agency. This national accreditation process should help the Mississippi Department of Human Services meet many of the general recommendations based on the Expert Case Record Review, Expert Fiscal Review, and Expert Management Review which were conducted as part of the lawsuit.

We agree with and support the recommendations from the Children's Bureau Child and Family Service Review which were incorporated into the Division of Family and Children's Services Program Improvement Plan.

In addition, we would like to recommend the following as part of the settlement agreement and plan:

- Development of a comprehensive community-based array of services which are regionally managed and available throughout Mississippi.
- As part of this array, a case management system, where local case management networks would coordinate the necessary and needed services for children and families to achieve the goals of safety, permanency and well-being.
- Full funding that would cover the actual cost of services that would follow the child through the system to ensure quality of services and appropriate therapeutic level of care based on individual needs
- Develop new or enhanced services to meet the changing needs of children and families including but not limited to:
  - Improved assessment services to determine child and family needs that will drive decision making
  - Increased number and types of quality foster homes including foster homes that can provide therapeutic and specialized services for special needs children
  - Support for safe kinship placements and kinship care
- Institute a system of quality assurance and tracking of performance outcomes that will help the Mississippi Department of Human Services monitor its services and help insure sustainability.
- Provide sufficient funding to meet the staffing and infrastructure needs of the Mississippi Department of Human Services, to insure manageable caseloads, strengthen recruitment and retention of qualified staff, and insure appropriate supervisory ratios and ongoing training.

Mr. J.T. Noblin, Clerk  
May 7, 2007  
Page 3

I appreciate the opportunity to share recommendations with the court and I am committed to a private/public partnership utilizing a collaborative approach to creating a system of care where children and families benefit from continuity of services and care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher M. Cherney", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Christopher M. Cherney  
Mississippi Children's Home Services  
1900 N. West Street  
P.O. Box 1078  
Jackson MS 39215  
Phone: 601-352-7784

Enclosures: Continuing of Care Model Document

cc:  
Eric Thompson  
Rusty Fortenberry